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Federal courthouse guards go on strike

By George Lane
Denver Post Staff Writer

Federal courthouse security guards in Denver and several other cities yesterday left their posts and picked up picket signs.

These same guards, numbering about 135 in Denver, St. Louis, Delaware, Philadelphia and Cleveland, a month ago let a strike deadline come and go without action.

"We tried to avert a strike and went back to the table with the company, and the company says, 'Here's our best and final (offer),' which was not ratified," said James Vissar, international president of the guards union.

"So I told the guys, 'Let's give them a counter and give them two weeks to respond,'" Vissar said yesterday. "That was up on Friday, the 10th. They called and said we got nothing to talk about. I said 'Well, we don't have anything to talk about either, I guess.'"

The guards, primarily retired po-

lice officers, are employees of the Minneapolis-based General Security Services Corp., which contracts with the U.S. Marshals Service to provide security at federal courts buildings.

Last month, the guards — who are members of the International Union of United Government Security Officers of America — accused their employer of refusing to bargain in good faith, and a strike deadline was set for Oct. 13.

But the strike didn't materialize at that time because officials agreed to return to the bargaining table.

Vissar said one of the major striking issues is contract language regarding a union shop that has been rejected by the union membership.

Yesterday, security at federal court buildings in the area was being handled by guard supervisors and uniformed guards from the Federal Center.

Officials of General Securities in Minnesota did not return calls.

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